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Atari Online News, Etc.  
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->From the Editor's Keyboard  
"~~~~~"

"Saying it like it is!"

Well, the heat of the winding-down summer has passed through; and we finally had some measurable rain, thankfully. My early outdoor work started off extremely well this year, but quickly went downhill over the past couple of months. The lawn burned, the flowers wilted early on, and I had the worst vegetable crop since we moved to the burbs. Even a couple of my trees have lost its leaves! It's amazing what no rain and a partial watering ban will do to things that like water to be able to grow! Disappointment only begins to reflect my feelings.

But, to get back into a good mood, I have a little tale to relate. Over the past six months or so, I've expanded my philatelic endeavors. I'm now into creating, producing, and selling (to a degree) first day and special event covers. First day signifies a postal cancellation that reflects the first day of issue; special event covers pertain to covers with special event cancellations. I got hooked doing one, and the joy has grown to doing others.

While first getting involved in this, I joined a couple of related organizations. One, called the Art Cover Exchange (ACE), involves exchanging correspondence and covers with other members. It's a good way to get to know people via correspondence (letters) and at the same time, watching your cover collection grow. The correspondence is a lot of fun!

One of the people I've been corresponding with is a 92-year old guy from southern Texas. What a character! He's a lot of fun reading about in his various missives. Some of his stories are downright hilarious, but he also has a serious side. Corresponding with him reminds me of the days of yore when Atari users corresponded on bulletin boards and the various online services. Rarely met in person, but we got to know people just by "chatting" online. I guess corresponding and exchanging covers with my "old friend" in Texas reminds me of those fun Atari days. The memories are wonderful.

Until next time...

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PEOPLE ARE TALKING

compiled by Joe Mirando  
joe@atarinews.org

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. Gonna be another short column this week. Folks must all be out preparing their lawn and greenery for fall. I'm going to have to start doing the same myself shortly, so I'm not using the mocking tone that Dana used to think that I was using. It wasn't mocking, it was bemusement. I grew up with my father having a green thumb. You name it: vegetable garden, shrubbery, lawn, trees, flowers, whatever. You name it, he could grow it. And he loved it. I think that was the key. He genuinely loved gardening and working with green, growing things. That's how I got to be lazy in that department. I'd mow the lawn when I was a kid, but the weeding, pruning and other actual "care" was always done by him. So Dana will probably mention how the dry weather stunting the lawns here in the northeast, how the bursts of hot, cold, dry and wet weather causes some trees to curl up some of their leaves early and let 'em go all brown and dry. All I know is that I'm going to have to break out the rake before too much longer. <G>

Okay, one tangent down. <grin>

Well, after last week's column, I had expected a couple of emails complaining about my use of a slang term for homosexuals. And I did, in fact, get a couple... two, to be exact.

They were not, however, the emails that I had expected. I had figured that any correspondence would center around the discussion of that particular topic in an online computer magazine. What I got instead was two emails saying that I had a point about placing so much importance on a little word, and that it was the context that both of these people (they did not mention whether or not they were gay, and I care enough to ask) thought was much more important.

This may sound strange, but I was disappointed that the few responses I got were in agreement with me. That's not when I'm at my best. I'm at my best when there's an exchange of opposing ideas. Oh well. We'll have to see what I can come up with for NEXT week. <Grin>

THIS week, I'm going to talk about a couple of studies that have come out in the past couple of weeks.

One of them, reported on in the Washington Post (URL <http://tinyurl.com/yqq4ne> [modified by editor]), talks about why people tend to continue to believe myths and misinformation even after the bad info has been debunked. It turns out that our brains tend to put more stock in what we hear first, and that debunking the incorrect information is difficult because by even mentioning it, you are reinforcing the incorrect info.

Can you say 'Catch-22'? I knew that you could.

This is very probably why you hear one side of the political spectrum can say things like "If <fill-in-the-blank> is elected, we're going to be attacked" and it will have more weight than the other side calmly and rationally giving their opinion on what actually HAS transpired. But it's not just being 'the first one out of the shoot' either.

The second article we're going to talk about comes from the Los Angeles

Times (URL <http://tinyurl.com/yurja7> [modified by editor]) that talks about a study of the differences between the brains of liberals and conservatives. According to the study, liberals "tolerate ambiguity and conflict better than conservatives because of how their brains work".

So, combining these two articles, you can control public opinion by catering myths and disinformation to one side or the other, and then cement it into the minds of one side or the other by projecting a facade of either conflict or cooperation, depending on which side you're on.

Now, thinking about this for more than a few minutes leads to the obvious conclusion that it's much easier to mobilize one side than the other, and much easier to de-mobilize the other side than the first one.

While it may seem to make more sense to join up with that first side than the second, in my mind, it's somewhat akin to siding with the schoolyard bully just because he seems to stand the better chance of coming out on top. Like my grandfather used to tell me, if somethin' ain't right, it just ain't right. Thanks Gramp.

There's a lot more than that in those articles, and most of both of them are well worth reading, even though both sites require registration. Take a look when you get a chance.

Neither of the articles mention computers, but I wonder if this could explain why some of us end up being PC-types, some Amiga-types, some Mac-types and some Atari-types. It's always seemed to me that there was something more at work there than just personal preference. Perhaps it's the first computer you see that catches your fancy, or that something peculiar can put you off. Perhaps a daunting, hard-to-use operating system can either draw you in because of the challenge, or put you off because of the difficulty.

Or maybe it's a random combination of occurrences. I, for instance, started out as a Commodore 64 user. I was one of the unlucky bastards who decided that they wanted to purchase a 1541 floppy drive right at the time that Commodore decided to slow down their supply chain. For a year I waited while the store I had been dealing with had my purchase price in full in their coffers.

After that, I vowed that I would never buy another Tramiel machine. Of course, it wasn't long after that that Jumpin' Jack Brash and the kids moved from Commodore to Atari, but I hadn't paid attention to that. All I paid attention to was the information I could find on the new generation of computers... the Mac, Amiga and Atari ST. I knew that I'd never be able to afford a Mac, didn't want to go the PC route, and disliked the Amiga because it had the 'Commodore' name. By the time I heard that the Tramiels were now Atari-folk, it was too late. I'd made up my mind that the ST was the machine for me.

So this all leads me to wonder if I preferred the ST because of its characteristics, or because of mine. I guess we'll never know, but I'm happy that I ended up where I did.

Now let's get to the news, hints, tips and info from the UseNet.

From the comp.sys.atari.st NewsGroup

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When someone mentions that the TT030's VGA signal is somewhat odd, Jo Even Skarstein adds:

"The TT's VGA port does have some weird sync signals, even on old VGA monitors the picture is shifted to one side. It does work on a Samsung LCD I have though. I also have a graphics card (Crazy Dots) for my TT, this card has normal VGA and works very well."

Hallvard Tangeraas adds his own thoughts:

"A little off-topic perhaps, but I've heard something about weird, non-standard video signals from the ST as well. Since I'm involved with some video-output circuitry I'd be interested in learning exactly what is "non-standard" with it, and what can be done to make it closer to the normal standards. What exactly defines the VGA standard by the way?"

Coda explains:

"The ST is not VGA. Neither is that weird as VGA monitors were not around at the time the ST was designed. However, the ST's output is more or less RGB analog (hence the ability to use a normal TV through SCART)."

Hallvard does some research and tells us:

"I looked up "VGA" at Wikipedia and found some information. I noticed some obvious differences:

VGA standard	Atari ST ("high mode")
standard	
-----	-----
* Refresh rates at up to 70 Hz	* 71.2 Hz
* 16-color and 256-color modes	* 2 colours
* 0,7 V peak-to-peak	* 1V peak-to-peak

Whilst the following is the same:

VGA standard	Atari ST ("high mode") standard
-----	-----
* 75 ohm impedance (9,3mA - 6,5mW) [1][2]	* 75 ohm impedance
* Maximum of 720 horizontal pixels	* 640 horizontal pixels
* Maximum of 480 lines	* 400 lines

However, I believe what I'm looking for is "VGA compatibility" and not "VGA standard". I want to ensure that the VGA connector I'm retrofitting to my Mega STE will be compatible with so-called "VGA" monitors (in mono mode of course).

The same goes for a TV with a SCART connector with the use of the RGB lines, and S-video as well as composite out for a TV via an AD-725 chip (RGB to NTSC/PAL encoder)."



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->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!  
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## Resident Evil 4 for Nintendo Wii

Unlike most movie franchises, some video games actually get better with each sequel. And sometimes even a remake improves on the original.

Such is the case with "Resident Evil 4" for the Nintendo Wii, which is still a great game despite treading through the same repetitive shoot-'em-up territory as countless titles before it. And even though it's nearly identical to a version released on the Nintendo GameCube more than 2 1/2 years ago, it still holds up surprisingly well.

In the mature-rated game, the protagonist Leon is on a mission to rescue the kidnapped daughter of the U.S. president, and must fight off hordes of zombie-like creatures that have been taken over by a mind-controlling parasite.

Calling the storyline or gameplay "realistic" would be a huge stretch, but the "Resident Evil" series does distinguish itself from similar games by challenging players to survive with limited ammunition.

There is no cache of extra ammo around every corner, and players must conserve each bullet and choose each shot wisely. Being too trigger-happy could mean having to resort to kicking and using a knife to fend off enemies, who often sneak up on you from behind.

That sense of unpredictability adds a great sense of atmosphere and tension to the game, and there are some moments of being startled by an attack.

The mood is especially unnerving with your speakers turned up loud, as the game makes great use of ambient sound to set a nervous mood.

Playing the game on the Nintendo Wii is an improvement over the previous versions (it is also available for PlayStation 2 and PCs) because of the new motion-sensored controls, which make targeting enemies much more intuitive and effective.

The tight controls make it easy to pick off a headshot with a sniper rifle, aim for an enemy's hand to make them drop their weapon, or cap their knee to cripple them.

Of course it's a lot harder when a group of enemies are charging at you but that's when a weapon like the shotgun comes in handy, with a wide blast radius that takes out a few bad guys at once.

Weapons must be purchased and upgraded as the game goes on, which gives players an incentive to pick up every last piece of gold and search out areas for objects like barrels and wooden boxes to collect extra money.

Unfortunately, "Resident Evil 4" for the Wii doesn't address one of the biggest drawbacks of previous versions - sluggish controls that don't feel very fluid.

Holding a button to run doesn't add much speed to movement, and navigating through some long, spread-out missions can feel like trudging through heavy snow.

While it's an annoyance that comes up often, it's a relatively minor complaint in a very fun immersive game that also has enough unlockable bonuses to encourage a second go through all the missions.

For Nintendo Wii owners who have played "Resident Evil 4" on another system, there aren't many reasons to get the game again.

But for anyone who missed the game the first time around, "Resident Evil 4" offers a fun and scary twist on the shooter genre.

### Godzilla: Unleashed Storms

Atari, Inc. Wednesday announced the further growth of one of its long-running publishing franchises with news that Godzilla: Unleashed, the ultimate giant monsters fighting game, is in development on the PlayStation2 computer entertainment system in addition to the Wii and Nintendo DS. Developed by Pipeworks, Godzilla: Unleashed is scheduled for a fall 2007 release.

Godzilla: Unleashed is a fighting game on a giant scale, starring the legendary Godzilla and a slew of at least 20 of some of the most renowned monsters of all-time. Gamers are challenged to save the planet from mayhem and destruction, but not before causing some of their own. Set in nine urban arenas, Godzilla: Unleashed's interactive 3D cityscapes, big destructible buildings, soaring skyscrapers and towering alien formations provide the backdrop to epic worldwide destruction.

"We are excited to bring Godzilla: Unleashed to the PlayStation 2 system," said Keehwan Her, Producer, Atari, Inc. "We've made some interesting adaptations from past Godzilla games, so players will encounter different story modes, new monster abilities, and more flexible multiplayer capabilities, ensuring a must-have Godzilla experience."

The character line-up on the PlayStation 2 system features new monsters not found on the Nintendo DS and Wii versions of the game. Players will fight at least 20 monsters, with the newcomers fighting alongside or against favorites from past Godzilla video games. Godzilla: Unleashed features an innovative non-linear storyline which allows players to influence how the story unfolds through their choices within battles, and a flexible multiplayer mode which supports up to four players for the ultimate city-crushing monster extravaganza.

### Nintendo Math: Wiimote + Nunchuk = Wii Zapper

The remote control for Nintendo's Wii game console, and the add-on



attachment known as the Nunchuk, are having their first offspring. It is named the Wii Zapper. On Monday, the games company announced that the Zapper will launch on November 19, bundled with Link's Crossbow Adventure for \$19.99.

Both controllers - the Wii controller, or Wiimote, and the Nunchuk - will be combined into one housing to create the Zapper. The Nunchuk, initially demonstrated at the 2005 Tokyo Game show, was the first attachment that Nintendo released for the Wiimote.

The Zapper connects to the Wiimote by a long cord, has an analog stick like the Nintendo GameCube controller's, and sports two buttons. The Zapper has a "classic style reminiscent of arcade-style games," Nintendo's senior vice president of marketing George Harrison said in a statement.

For instance, Link's Crossbow Training, based on the Legend of Zelda series, could be useful if you're hoping for a career as Robin Hood. Assuming the role of the Link the hero and using the Zapper, players must practice and perfect their crossbow techniques. First, unmoving bulls-eyes and then moving targets are provided as tests. Then, if players' eyes are good and the wind is at their back, they will graduate to defending themselves - that is, Link - against all manner of enemies.

Lest you think that Zappers are only good for emulating crossbows, various third-party game publishers "have lined up to support" the new interface device, according to Nintendo.

In EA's Medal of Honor Heroes 2, players can use a new, Wii-exclusive Arcade Mode to make their way through World War II. The game supports single-player mode as well as a multiplayer mode for up to 32 players.

Capcom's Resident Evil: The Umbrella Chronicles enables one or two players to use the Zapper against bunches of zombies. In the course of doing so, the back-story behind the fall of the Umbrella Corporation is unveiled.

In addition to being compatible with these titles, the Zapper can become your own personal, arcade-like light-gun in SEGA's Ghost Squad.

The Zapper could drive sales of games as well as consoles. Already, the Wii has four of the top 10 game titles in a recent NPD report, and it is positioned to increase its strength.

A recent report published by Gaming Target said that there were now more Wii-exclusive games in development than for any other console, a position that the Xbox 360 had held since such tracking began in late 2006. According to the report, the Wii has 113 exclusives, Microsoft's Xbox 360 has 96, and Sony's PlayStation 3 only 47.

Electronic Arts, the world's largest video game publisher, has said that it is less expensive to develop for the Wii than for the graphically intensive PS3 or Xbox 360.

Take-Two Forms New Casual Games Label

Take-Two Interactive Software Inc. said on Monday it formed a new

publishing label devoted to casual games called 2K Play.

As part of the new label, the company also said it struck a licensing agreement with Nickelodeon that includes properties such as Dora the Explorer and Go, Diego, Go!

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A-ONE's Headline News  
The Latest in Computer Technology News  
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

Nonprofit Group Delays "\$100 Laptop," Hikes Cost

A nonprofit group that plans to produce low-cost computers for poor children has delayed production and raised the laptops' price as it works out flaws in the product, a spokesman for the foundation said on Friday.

The One Laptop per Child Foundation's XO laptop will sell for about \$188, up from the \$176 the group announced in May, said foundation spokesman George Snell.

That's almost double the original goal of the foundation's founder, Nicholas Negroponte, a Massachusetts Institute of Technology researcher and the brother of U.S. Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte.

Negroponte, who founded the MIT Media Lab, often refers to the product as the "\$100 laptop."

Production, which was slated to begin this month, has been postponed to November so that the group can work out bugs in the final beta version of the green-and-white laptops, said foundation spokesman George Snell.

Some 40,000 units will be produced in November, then about 80,000 the following month, he said.

"We are testing it. We are making sure all the software works," he said. "We are making all the corrections on it that need to be made before the product comes out."

The foundation plans to sell the computers directly to governments, which will provide the laptops to grammar school children at no cost.

It has yet to announce any customers.

"We are not disclosing any orders until we have a final computer," Snell said. "We are in talks with dozens of countries."

The foundation has said it may sell the laptop on the commercial market as well, though at a higher price.

If the project is a success, it could pressure the rest of the computer industry to start offering similar machines.

The XO laptop uses a microprocessor from Advanced Micro Devices Inc and Linux software developed by Red Hat Inc.

Microsoft Corp has said that it is testing the machines to determine whether they are capable of running its Windows operating system.

Chipmaker Intel Corp recently teamed up with the foundation saying the two might collaborate on a second generation version of the XO laptop.

#### EU Antitrust Power In Balance On Microsoft Decision

When a European court hands down its landmark Microsoft antitrust decision next Monday, at stake will be nothing less than the power of the European Commission to regulate the high-tech industry.

The decision by the 13-judge Grand Chamber of the Court of First Instance in Luxembourg will determine whether the European Union's executive arm ruled properly in 2004 that Microsoft used its near-monopoly Windows system to push rivals out of the marketplace. Competitive products must perch on that platform.

Companies around the world are waiting for a decision that could cut into the Commission's power, as it considers antitrust cases and complaints involving Microsoft, Intel, Qualcomm, Rambus and others.

"If we lose this one, we're in deep (trouble). It would put in question our ability to regulate competition in high-tech industries," a Commission official said.

The Commission held that Microsoft skewed the scales by taking advantage of the fact that more than 95 percent of the world's laptops and desktops run on Windows. Microsoft says the EU executive is interfering with its ability to design software.

The European Union judges have taken an agonizing 15 months to decide the case since they conducted public hearings, leading to speculation the verdict may be long, complex and nuanced.

Most obviously, the court will decide whether to slice the Commission-imposed record 497 million euro (\$685.4 million) fine.

But that is pocket money to Microsoft.

Both sides care far more about sanctions the Commission ordered on Microsoft's business practices in two major areas.

One part of the decision involves streaming media software used to watch Google's YouTube, download Apple iTunes or listen to Webcasts.

RealNetworks' RealPlayer once dominated the field. The Commission found Microsoft illegally built its own Windows Media Player into every copy of Windows sold in order to disadvantage companies such as Real.

Real won a \$761 million settlement from Microsoft in a U.S. case involving the same issue in 2005. The Commission ordered Microsoft sell an additional version of Windows without Media Player, which the company did.

Almost no one bought it.

The court could endorse that order, or it may throw out the remedy, giving Microsoft a partial win. It could go yet further by throwing out the remedy and telling the Commission it was mistaken to tell Microsoft how to design software, cutting the heart out of Commission authority.

A second aspect of the case covers connections between desktops and central computers, called servers, used to print documents, access files and sign on.

It used to be that Microsoft did not build servers, but gave outside server producers the information they needed to connect with Windows. Microsoft eventually entered the server market.

After that, rivals complained that when Microsoft offered new versions of its operating system, it stopped providing information they needed to interconnect. Microsoft's market share jumped and big competitors quit, the Commission found.

The Commission ordered Microsoft to make better interconnect information available. It says Microsoft has yet to comply adequately and fined it an additional 280.5 million euros.

Microsoft says it spent vast resources to comply but that the Commission has never given it clear instructions.

"At issue are whether companies can improve their products by developing new features, and whether a successful company must hand over its valuable intellectual property to competitors," Microsoft has argued.

#### States Seek Extra Oversight Of Microsoft

A group of states led by California asked a federal judge Tuesday to extend court oversight of Microsoft Corp.'s business practices for five more years.

The request comes as the antitrust settlement reached in 2002 between Microsoft, the federal government and 17 states is scheduled to expire Nov. 12. Microsoft has been under the supervision of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia for the past five years and has had to report regularly on its compliance with the settlement.

But Stephen Houck, an attorney representing California, said an extension was necessary to ensure that Microsoft's new Vista operating system continues to comply with the consent decree.

"It would be short-sighted to end the final judgements just now," Houck told Judge Colleen Kollar-Kotelly.

California was joined in its request by Connecticut, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Massachusetts and the District of Columbia. Two former members of the so-called "California group," Utah and Florida, did not join the request. Officials from both states have said they believe the consent decree has been effective.

The remaining members of the California group said in court papers that

the antitrust settlement had done little to reduce Microsoft's dominant market share in computer operating systems and Web browser software.

Once the consent decree expires in November, "the principal constraint on Microsoft's ability to abuse its market power will be gone," the states said.

Kollar-Kotelly said she would consider the request, but added that any extension would need to be for an "identifiable purpose." Currently, Microsoft is on track to be in compliance with the antitrust settlement when it expires, Kollar-Kotelly said.

Echoing arguments made by Microsoft in its filings, she also noted that the consent decree's remedies were meant to be narrow and were not necessarily intended to reduce Microsoft's market share in any particular product.

The antitrust settlement barred Microsoft from certain anticompetitive behaviors, such as seeking deals with computer makers to exclude competing software, and sought to ensure that Microsoft couldn't use its operating system monopoly to stifle competition.

Jack Evans, a spokesman for Microsoft, said "we're a bit surprised that a few states are now requesting an extension," given that they criticized the settlement as ineffective in court filings last month.

An aspect of the consent decree dealing with software for computer servers was extended last year to November 2009. California also said it will request that that provision be extended for three more years, to 2012.

The Justice Department, meanwhile, said in court filings that it believes the antitrust settlement has been effective in encouraging the development of new software, such as competing Web browsers by Apple Inc. and Mozilla.

Aaron Hoag, a department lawyer, told Kollar-Kotelly that Vista has already been tested by a technical committee and shouldn't pose future antitrust problems.

California agreed to file its request in writing by Oct. 15. The court still plans to hold a final hearing on Microsoft's compliance with the consent decree Nov. 6.

#### Big Blue Joins Forces With OpenOffice.org

IBM said it is joining the OpenOffice.org community to collaborate on software development for the Open Document Format (ODF), an ISO standard that governs the creation, storage, and exchange of documents.

Mike Rhodin, general manager of IBM's Lotus division, said IBM expects the collaborative effort to "provide tangible benefits to users of OpenOffice.org technology around the world" through the creation of "an even broader range of ODF-supporting applications and solutions." He said that by leveraging OpenOffice technology in its own software products, IBM hopes "to deliver innovative value to users of IBM products and services."

OpenOffice.org marketing project lead John McCreesh welcomed IBM's future commitment to package and distribute new works that leverage the OpenOffice.org technology supporting ODF. "ODF is a once-in-a-generation opportunity for the I.T. industry to unify round a standard, and deliver lasting benefit to users of desktop technology," McCreesh said.

Initially, IBM will be contributing the code that it has been developing as part of its Lotus Notes software product, which includes accessibility enhancements that just might help OpenOffice.org reach parity with what rival Microsoft currently offers handicapped workers through its Office business productivity suite.

Accessibility is still a huge issue, especially with governments, noted Gartner Client Computing vice president Michael Silver. "There were a lot of eyes on accessibility during the development of OpenOffice.org version 2 and the improvements were big, but not sufficient for many," Silver explained.

Silver said he thinks IBM should have become an official part of the OpenOffice effort long before now. Still, "having IBM's help with this will surely help OpenOffice.org," he said.

Rhodin indicated that, over the long haul, IBM would be dedicating software engineering resources that would be making ongoing contributions to the feature richness and code quality of the ODF-based productivity suite. The collaboration effort might be just what OpenOffice.org needs to encourage more organizations worldwide to embrace its ODF-based technology.

"ODF has been an ISO standard for some time now, but adoption is still very slow," said IDC Nordic Group managing director Per Anderson. "There are a limited number of companies and organizations looking at ODF, and most of them are just considering it."

By contrast, IDC's latest survey shows that several companies and organizations are actively implementing Microsoft's competing Open XML format, particularly in Europe. "Our recent survey shows that commercial companies put more emphasis on pragmatic issues like long-term document viability and backwards compatibility rather than whether the standard is a formal open standard," Anderson explained.

IBM's commitment to ODF might actually represent a greater blow to Microsoft's ambitions than its recent defeat at the ISO in a vote that would have put Open XML on the fast track for becoming an international standard for documents.

Anderson said he believes the ISO setback is minor with respect to the private sector. "It could be slightly more significant in the public sector, but this will be dependent on the ISO's next voting round," Anderson explained.

Nevertheless, a considerable number of obstacles to ODF's adoption still need to be addressed. "What will help will be the potential results, not just having the IBM name in the mix," Silver said.

The SCO Group Inc., licensor of the Unix operating system, filed for bankruptcy protection Friday, drained by unsuccessfully filing lawsuits claiming its software code was misappropriated by developers of the open-source Linux operating system.

The Lindon, Utah, company said it is seeking protection from creditors under Chapter 11 as it continues to license and improve Unix for corporate servers.

"We want to assure our customers and partners that they can continue to rely on SCO products, support and services for their critical business operations," Darl McBride, president and chief executive, said in a statement Friday.

McBride has blamed competition from Linux for operating losses and the ongoing slide in company revenues. The company said its operating loss in the quarter ending April 30 was \$1.1 million. A year earlier, it lost \$3.9 million.

In August, U.S. District Court Dale Kimball ruled that Novell Inc., not SCO, owns the copyrights covering the Unix operating system. SCO licenses the Unix software for corporate servers.

The case could leave SCO with a bigger liability: Kimball said SCO may owe Novell software royalties.

Kimball's ruling was relief for IBM Corp., the target of one lawsuit by SCO claiming Big Blue dumped Unix code in Linux.

Separately, Novell is countersuing SCO for damages in a trial that was to begin next week but is now on hold because of the bankruptcy filing.

Chapter 11 frees a company from lawsuits by creditors while it reorganizes its finances.

McBride didn't immediately return a message relayed Friday through a public-relations firm.

#### Anti-Spam Law Challenged

Virginia's law banning the massive distribution of junk e-mail is an unconstitutional barrier to free speech, a lawyer for a former spammer told the state's highest court Wednesday.

Jeremy Jaynes of Raleigh, N.C., was considered among the top 10 spammers in the world when he was charged in 2003 in the nation's first felony case against illegal spamming. He was convicted and sentenced to nine years in prison.

Prosecutors said Jaynes, using aliases and false Internet addresses, bombarded Web users with junk e-mails peddling sham products and services. He was charged in Virginia because the e-mails went through an AOL server in Loudoun County, where America Online is based.

Almost all 50 states have passed anti-spamming laws.

"There's absolutely no question spam can be regulated," Jaynes' lawyer, Thomas Wolf, told the Virginia Supreme Court. "The problem with Virginia's statute is that it attaches severe criminal penalties to unsolicited bulk e-mail of a noncommercial nature."

Wolf said anonymous speech is protected by the First Amendment. A person anywhere in the world sending anonymous political or religious e-mails in bulk could unwittingly break the law because some of the messages almost certainly would pass through servers in Virginia, he said.

But State Solicitor General William E. Thro said the law doesn't bar speech - it prohibits falsifying Internet routing and transmission information to electronically trespass on a privately owned computer network.

"There is no constitutional right to use the property of others to engage in speech," Thro said.

He said using unsolicited bulk e-mail to "commandeer" a privately owned computer network is akin to stealing a car to drive to a political rally.

In Jaynes' case, prosecutors presented evidence of 53,000 illegal e-mails sent over three days in July 2003. However, authorities believe Jaynes was responsible for spewing out 10 million e-mails a day in an enterprise that grossed up to \$750,000 per month.

Thro said that on a typical day, about three-fourths of the e-mail sent through AOL is rejected as spam. Customers of AOL and other Internet service providers expect to be protected from spam, and all providers have filters intended to do just that, Thro said. Spammers use false information to try to circumvent the filters.

The Virginia Court of Appeals, the state's intermediate appellate court, upheld the law and affirmed Jaynes' conviction last September. In a unanimous ruling, the court said the statute "does not prevent anonymous speech ... but prohibits trespassing on private computer networks through intentional misrepresentation, an activity that merits no First Amendment protection."

Jaynes' lawyers also claim the law is unconstitutionally vague and that it impermissibly regulates activity outside Virginia - points that also were rejected by the state appeals court.

Jaynes has remained free while his case is appealed. The Supreme Court likely will issue its ruling in November.

#### Heavy Internet Users Unplugged By US Cable Company

Several Internet users in the United States have been unplugged by their service provider because they download too much, a press report said here Friday.

Cable Internet and entertainment provider Comcast "has punished some transgressors by cutting off their Internet service, arguing that excessive downloaders hog Internet capacity and slow down the network for other customers," the Washington Post reported.



Comcast spokesman Charlie Douglas told AFP the company was addressing "the problem of abusive activity that adversely impacts on everybody else's experience."

"I can't give you a number" for clients who have been disconnected, said Douglas, while assuring that customers whose plugs were pulled are "very rare."

According to the Washington Post, a customer would have to download the equivalent of 1,000 songs or four feature films a day to trigger a disconnection warning.

Comcast gives customers a month to fix problems or upgrade their service before they are disconnected, the Washington Post said.

An unplugged client in Rockville, a suburb of Washington, has filed a complaint with the county he lives in, saying his contract with his service provider states that he is entitled to unlimited Internet access, officials in Montgomery County said.

A recent report by the ABI market research company warned that the growth in demand for "bandwidth-hungry services such as HDTV and online gaming is leading to a critical lack of capacity" in US cable operators' networks.

"Cable TV operators trying to satisfy the increasing bandwidth demands of HDTV customers feel very much like the thrifty grocer who tried to cram ten pounds of potatoes into a five-pound bag," ABI research director Stan Schatt said last month.

"The increasing bandwidth demands on cable operators will soon reach crisis stage, yet this is a \* dirty little industry secret\* that no one talks about."

### Cyber Attacks: A New Weapon In The State Arsenal

Cyber-attacks against government networks in recent months illustrate how states like China are discovering the power of a new weapon that is less expensive and more discreet than battalions of tanks or spies.

Cyber assaults blamed on China have struck sensitive government sites in Britain, France, Germany and the United States - including the Pentagon and the French defense ministry, officials recently confirmed to major media. China denies the accusations.

"A state can use these tools to exert its power. States are beginning to understand that, and in a lot of ways the Chinese are taking the lead, and the Russians as well," said Ned Moran of the Terrorism Research Center.

"A country like China is realizing that instead of building a robust espionage network, based on people in a country and recruiting spies, they can do the same thing at a very low cost by executing cyber attacks," Moran said.

The expert at the Virginia-based Terrorism Research Center, a branch of Total Intelligence Solutions - a firm founded by former CIA officials -

said it was clear the recent spate of hacking came from China.

"You can detect patterns, coming from the same country, the same network, with the same type of techniques," he said.

"That gives you a sense that it's probably coming from the Chinese, based on what I've seen. The Chinese government either is doing it, or is looking the other way as Chinese citizens are doing it."

Operating quietly and methodically, the cyber attackers identify key people in an organization and then send them e-mails to penetrate the network, he said.

"They send you an email that looks like it comes from your boss, with a link that they ask you to click on. Once they are in your computer they can get into your network and they start looking for information and very quietly copying it and moving it out," Moran said.

The emails target two to three people "to stay under the radar," he said. "They are very patient."

Successful attempts at breaking into defense networks raise the possibility of shutting down communications between a commander and forces in the field, Moran said.

"They would be able to control a ship, not change its GPS (global navigation) coordinate but more likely cut off communications," said Moran.

The Pentagon reportedly suspects Beijing of preparing a plan to disable the US aircraft carrier fleet, while the Financial Times reported this month the Chinese military had broken into a computer network used by the office of Defense Secretary Robert Gates.

In an apparent warning to China, officials from European and US governments have confirmed cyber attacks and blamed the breaches on Beijing.

"Typically when these attacks get announced, they have happened many months before," Moran said. "Because when it happens, you don't want anybody to know that you know these attacks are taking place."

According to Moran, official confirmation from Europe and the United States indicates Western governments are faced with a growing threat from information warfare.

An attack on Estonia's information network earlier this year, allegedly carried out from Russia, represented a certain type of economic-oriented cyber assault, Moran said.

"They shut down their banks, the (Estonian) government's ability to collect taxes, the media's capacity to get information out to the public," he said.

The move represented a Russian warning to Estonia, he said, "without encircling it with tanks."

Although Estonia is a member of NATO, the alliance chose not to respond to the cyber attack amid initial confusion over whether an attack was indeed under way, he said.

"Basically the Russians got away with it, and they achieved their goals," he said.

The case of Estonia underscores how cyberwarfare can deliver results in a way that in the past only large spy networks or vast armies could produce.

"States are starting to figure out how cyberwarfare can help them achieve their goals, espionage, economic embargo, or coercion - to cause pain to your enemies so they change their behavior," Moran said.

Cyber warfare is now a common pursuit among most states, said Bruce Schneier, who has written books on the subject. "Everybody does it," he said.

Moreover, government networks are plagued with "lousy security" arrangements, he said. And as government information networks become more complex, the networks become increasingly vulnerable.

"Complexity is the worst enemy of security," Schneier said.

But he said the dangers of cyber warfare should not be overstated, saying US battle ships could not be steered remotely by a cyber hacker.

#### Interpol Wants Cybercrime Combat Centers

Interpol proposed on Wednesday the creation of global and regional anti-crime centers to fight criminal activity online and respond quickly to emergency cybercrime alerts.

The Internet should not be allowed to become a place where criminals have the upper hand and can escape punishment, Interpol Secretary-General Ronald K. Noble told an international cybercrimes conference in New Delhi.

Officials from 37 countries discussed identity theft, online bank fraud, Internet gaming and the risks of online terrorist activity during a two-day conference in the Indian capital. It was organized by France-based Interpol, the world's largest international police organization, with 186 member countries.

Creating global and regional anti-crime centers "is an ambitious idea, but we are determined to turn (it) into a reality because this problem is too big for even the G-8 and Council of Europe," Noble said. "It requires a truly global response."

The centers would help law enforcement around the world with investigations, training and accessing resources from a combined team of police officers and computer experts, he said.

Inaugurating the conference, Indian Home Minister Shivraj Patil also called for international cooperation in combating Internet crimes.

#### Seattle Man Gets Two Years for eBay Fraud

A Seattle man has been sentenced to two years in prison for selling computers and cameras on eBay but never actually delivering the goods.

Over a four-year period, Jordan Dias, 40, collected more than US\$94,000 from victims who thought they were purchasing items from a legitimate seller, the U.S. Department of Justice said Friday in a statement.

Dias, who defrauded more than 100 people via this scam will now have to pay more than \$73,000 in restitution, and serve three years parole after his 24-month sentence.

This type of Internet auction fraud is the most frequently reported type of online crime, according to the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation's Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3), a clearing-house where consumers can file online crime complaints.

In 2006, the last year for which data is available, the IC3 logged more than 207,000 complaints relating to auction fraud. That amounted to about 45 percent of all complaints received.

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